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THE
CAMBRO-BRITON.

SEPTEMBER, 1820.

NULLI QUIDEM MIHI SATIS ERUDITI VIDENTUR, QUIBUS
NOSTRA IGNOTA SUNT. *CICERO de Legibus.*

WELSH LANGUAGE.

— — — — —
ITS ORNAMENTAL PROPERTIES.

AMONG the singular attributes of the Welsh tongue its extraordinary, and almost illimitable, faculty of giving new beauty and variety to its expression, by the aid of prefixes and other adjuncts, is, perhaps, the most worthy of investigation. This power springs, undeniably, from that elementary character of the language, which has already been the subject of some inquiry in this work *, and which, as being obviously founded in the most natural principles, serves essentially to prove the purity and antiquity of the Welsh tongue. If, indeed, we were not to come to this conclusion, we should be at a loss to account for these ornamental properties, as belonging to the language of a people, who have never been distinguished by history for their proficiency in arts and sciences, and to whom, consequently, an artificial embellishment of their native speech to any great extent could not reasonably be ascribed. The bards, it is true, may have made some progress in this way; but even the bards, with all their poetical predilections, and with all their traditional lore, could never have raised such an edifice, if Nature herself had not laid the foundation †. These properties, therefore, must not only be considered as

* See VOL. I. pp. 81 and 161.

† It has been somewhere intimated, in the former part of this work, that the Welsh tongue owed much of its beauty and energy to the cultivation, which it received under the Bardic Institution: and, in a qualified sense, this is certainly correct. The language was, no doubt, essentially improved by the bards and the early poets; but, on the other side, it must always be remembered, that they only wrought on materials, which they found ready to their

the most remarkable, but likewise as among the most simple and primitive, of the various characteristics of the Welsh language.

The ornaments of expression, about to be now considered, may be classed under the following general heads. 1. Qualifying Prefixes : 2. Plural Terminations : 3. Singular Terminations : 4. Comparisons of Adjectives : 5. Pronouns, and Pronominal Prepositions. It will be impossible, within the view intended to be here taken of these several classes, to enter into a particular and minute illustration of them, and which the reader will be disposed to admit, when he is informed, that, generally speaking, every primitive word in the language, whether noun, adnoun, or verb, is capable of more than a hundred variations, by means of prefixes and other auxiliary particles.

The first class to be considered are the Qualifying Prefixes, and which may again be divided into Primitive and Compound. A few of these of the most elementary character have already been noticed in the Essays above cited ; and what will now be added are formed upon an extension of the same principle. The number of primitive or simple Prefixes is about fifty, and they are, generally, unlimited in their adaptation to all words, as far as they do not thereby nullify the sense. These are again united, one with another, to the number of about two hundred and fifty combinations, to form the second subdivision of Prefixes. Hence, there are about three hundred of both subdivisions, and universal in their use as far as can possibly be required.

For reasons already mentioned, a particular investigation of the various powers of these Prefixes cannot be here undertaken : a selection will, therefore, be made from among those, which have no equivalents in English, as most worthy of attention. And, perhaps, the most satisfactory mode of giving the necessary illustration will be by adhering to one primitive word, to which such prefixes may be annexed. The following then, are some of the variations of the word *Lled*, signifying breadth or expansion :—*Cyrlled*, of equal breadth,—*Gogywled*, partly of equal breadth,—*Diogywled*, not being partly of equal breadth,—*Amledu*, to expand about,—*Goamledu*, partly to expand about,—*Diamledu*, to cease expanding about,—*Goramledu*, to expand about extremely,—*Tryledu*, to expand through,—*Ymledu*, to expand mutually, to

hands, and brought no stock of their own. They found their language rich in native, but hidden, stores of energy and harmony ; and they deserve the highest praise for having converted them to so noble a use. It was never meant to assert, they had done more than this.

spread one's self,—*Ymddyledu*, to be mutually expanding,—*Ymorledu*, to overspread one's self,—*Dadymledu*, to unexpand one's self,—*Adymledu*, to re-expand one's self,—*Arledu*, to expand upon,—*Arymledu*, to spread one's self upon.

In the same manner, from *Ciliaw*, to recede, we have *Enciliaw*, to retreat,—*Dygilia*, be thou receding,—*Ymgilia*, draw thyself back,—*Ymgiliant*, they will mutually recede,—*Goymgiliant*, they will mutually recede a little,—*Dymciliant*, they will cease to recede,—*Dirgiliant*, they will forcibly recede,—*Rhygilier hi*, she will be made to recede overmuch.

But it may be more interesting to diversify the subject by selecting a few examples from the works of the bards.

Tir Brochwel, *hir rhygoddod* !—*Llywarch Hen*.

The land of Brochwel, long *has it been sorely vexed*.

Carav a ddigerais,—*Id*.

I love what *I had refrained from loving*.

Gorwyliais nos yn achadw fin

Gorloes rydau dwyr Dygen Vreiddin.—*Gwalchmai*.

*I have overwatched the night, protecting the border
Of the over-plaintive fords of the water of the Breiddin hill.*

Am ardal Caer Dathl

Amdrychion berion buant,

Amgoch bryn, a phenryn, a phant.—*Cynddelw*.

Around the territory of Caer Dathl

There were *mangled ones about of vultures*

Reddening around the hill, and promontory, and dale.

Gwyach rudd gorvudd goralwai,

Ar doniar gwyar gonoviai.—*Id*.

The red cormorant for an *overglut did extremely call*,

On a wave of gore *did flaggingly swim*.

Rhian—

Cytlcuer gwawr dydd pan ddwyre hynt

Cyrtliw eiry gorwyn gorwydd epynt.—*Id*.

A maiden—

*Of equal splendour with the dawn of day, when it ascends its
course,*

*Of the same hue as the extremely white snow of the front of the
declivity.*

Tôu wen orewyn—

Cyrtliw ag arica awr yd gynnydd.—*Hywel ab Owain*.

The white wave, mantled with foam—
Of the same hue as the hour at the time it rises.

Similar examples might be adduced, without number : indeed, very few passages could be selected, and especially from the more ancient bards, which do not exemplify this remarkable and highly poetical quality of the Welsh tongue. The following sublime lines, however, by the poet Casnodyn, describing the Day of Judgment, will, with those already transcribed, be sufficient for the present purpose,

Pan wnel Duw ddangaws ei varan,
Dyddwyre dy daerad arnan,
Dychrya twryv torvoedd yn eban
Dychyrch hynt, dychre gwynt gwaeddvan,
Dychymawrio tŷn amlw amlân,
Dychymer uveliar bâr bân
Dychrys gwrys gwres tandde allan.—Casnodyn,

When God shall manifest his presence,
The house of earth shall uplift itself over us,
The terror of the tumultuous noise of legions in conflict
Will be taking its course,—a loudly shouting wind will be howling,
The wave of varied hue will be spraying itself about the shore.
The sulphureous element will be taking to itself high wrath,
The ardency of the heat of fire will be hastening out.

From these examples, inadequate as they may be fully to illustrate the subject, it cannot fail to be inferred, that the language, to which they belong, must possess abundant treasures, whether for augmenting the force and delicacy of its expression or for increasing the harmony and variety of its poetical numbers. Indeed this modification and extension of the meaning of words, by the agency of qualifying prefixes, is amongst the most obvious proofs of that ornamental richness of phraseology, in which the Welsh surpasses most, if not all, other tongues.

With respect to the next class, that of Plural Terminations, some primitive words assume a plural form by a mere mutation of vowels ; but, in general, plurals become so by a variety of terminal adjuncts, in number about twenty, and which are, for the most part, elementary terms, signifying, in an abstract sense, continuity, extension, or succession *. But our present business is only with such as are of an ornamental nature, and which not only

* Among these the most frequent are, *aw, awr, ed, edd, i, iau, ion, od, odd, on, wys, ydd*. Most of these terminations, in their original and elementary sense, implied the qualities ascribed to them in the text.

augment, but in some respect vary, the sense of the words, to which they are attached. These plural terminations may, with reference to this view of them, be subdivided into those of Nouns, and those of Adnouns or Adjectives. The former are of a diminutive character, implying either endearment or contempt: the latter are such as give to plural adnouns the force and quality of nouns. The following are examples of the first of these,

Dynion, men :—*Dynionos*, little men.—*Dynionach*, poor little men,

Thus the poet,

Dowch y pydron *dynionach*.

Come ye corrupt *frail mortals*.

Plant, children,

Plantos, dear little children.

Meibion, sons,

Meibionain, puny sons.

Thus, too, *Gweision* becomes *Gweisionain*, as in the following line,—

Wrth Wen *gweisionain* oeddynt.

Compared to Gwen they were *puny striplings*.

Other instances might easily be selected, but these are sufficiently illustrative of the quality above noticed: we may therefore proceed to exemplify the second subdivision under the last mentioned class, wherein plural adjectives assume the functions of nouns, as,—

Dynawol, human,

Dynolion, human beings.

Daiarawol, terrestrial,

Daiarolion, terrestrials.

Nepawol, celestial,

Nevolion, celestials.

Marawol, mortal,

Marwolion, mortals.

Cain, splendid,

Ceinion, splendid things, jewels.

Mda small;

Manion, small particles.

The Singular Terminations, which form the third Class under the preceding arrangement, are such as give to words a diminutive sense, similar to that conveyed by some of the plural affixes just noticed. And these are of three kinds, being formed, first, on a singular noun,—secondly, on a singular adjective,—and, thirdly, on a plural noun. A few instances of these will here be given in the order, in which they have now been mentioned. And it may be premised, with respect to the first sub-division, that the feature is common to the Latin and Italian, and, in some degree also, to the French: and it has always been considered in those tongues as a source of particular beauty and delicacy. Why, therefore, is not the same merit to be conceded to it in Welsh, and that too, as it deserves, to a far greater extent?

FIRST SUBDIVISION.

Dyn, a man :—*Dyno*, a manikin, also *Dynyn*, (masc.) *Dynen*, (fem.) *Dynum*, (neut.)

*Min**, a mouth,

Minws, a tiny mouth.

Mant, the region of the lips,

Mantach, a shrivelled mouth,

Hâd, seed.

Hedyn, a grain of corn,

Yd, corn,

Yden, a grain.

Aur, gold,

Euryn, a piece of gold.

Tân, fire,

Tanen, a spark of fire.

Oen, a lamb.

Oenen, a lambkin.

To this subdivision may also be referred several diminutive proper names, as *Bedo*, *Deio*, *Mocyn*, *Meigen*, *Cynan*, and others.

SECOND SUBDIVISION.

Mwyn, kind :—*Mwynyn*, (masc.) a kind one, *Mwynen*, (fem.) *Mwynan*, (neut.)

Rhudd, red,

Rhudden, a ruby.

THIRD SUBDIVISION.

Myrion, emmets,—*Myrionyn*, (masc.) an emmet, *Myrionen*, (fem.).

Grugion, the same,—*Grugionyn*, (masc.) the same, *Grugionen*, (fem.).

Meillion, trefoils,—*Meillionen*, (fem.) a trefoil.

The fourth general Class, embracing Comparisons of Adjectives, possesses a feature, peculiar, perhaps, to the Welsh language. In addition to the three degrees of comparison, which it possesses, in common with other languages, and expresses alike by auxiliary words, as in English, and by terminations, as in the ancient and some modern tongues, it has also a degree, denoting equality or co-equality, and which is farther capable of being adapted to other modes of speech, as the following examples will evince.

Pell, far,—*Pellach*, farther,—*Pellav*, farthest.

Pelled, so far as, or *Cybelled*, equally as far as.

* It may be curious to observe, with respect to the word *min*, that its simple and proper meaning is an edge or rim, as the edge of a sword, or the rim of any orifice, whence it came to denote the lip, and, by an extension of the idea, the mouth. Accordingly, *min-rin* means edge to edge and lip to lip. This may help to explain the bold Hebrew metaphor, by which *Pi*, a mouth, is applied to the edge of a sword, and translated the "mouth of a sword." And the Greek *διζυμος*, or two-mouthed, is also applied to a two-edged sword.—There are in Welsh other names for mouth, as *ceg*, *genau*, *mant*, and *sarn* : the first is used when our conversation has reference to eating,—the second when applied to the organ of speech,—the third to the form of the mouth. The fourth is, more strictly, the internal part or hollow of the mouth, and is generally used for the mouth of animals. *Min* occurs, most commonly, in an amatory acceptation.

The last of these forms of comparison may also be used as an exclamation; as,—

<i>Tirioned yw!</i>	How pleasant it is!
<i>Truaned!</i>	How wretched!
<i>O waned!</i>	O how weak!
<i>O gased!</i>	O how odious!

Or, to shew the copious resources of the Welsh tongue, this mode of speech may also be expressed by an auxiliary word, as in other languages.

<i>Mor dirion, yw!</i>	How pleasant it is!
<i>Mor druan!</i>	How wretched!
<i>O mor wan!</i>	O how weak!
<i>O mor gds!</i>	O how odious!

It is impossible not to perceive and to admire the niceties of expression, of which the peculiar degree of comparison, above noticed, is capable. At least it must be admitted, that it avoids, by a happy brevity, the tedious circumlocution, adopted in other tongues, to arrive at the same end.

The last description of ornamental adjuncts, under consideration, is that belonging to Pronouns and pronominal Prepositions, and which will be seen to involve *phenomena*, not less worthy of attention than any of the preceding classes. And here again we have another feature, of which, it is probable, the Welsh tongue only can boast, in those delicate discriminations of persons and situations, which are embraced by its demonstrative Pronouns, and for which, in other languages, we are compelled to resort to a circuitous, and often ambiguous, mode of expression. This will be sufficiently exemplified in the following instances.

Masc.	Fem.	Neut.
<i>Hwn, this.</i>	<i>Hon.</i>	<i>Hyn.</i>
<i>Hwna, that one present.</i>	<i>Hona.</i>	<i>Hyna.</i>
<i>Hwnw, that one absent.</i>	<i>Hono.</i>	<i>Hyny.</i>
<i>Hwnyma, this here.</i>	<i>Honyma.</i>	<i>Hynyma.</i>
<i>Hwnyna, this there.</i>	<i>Honyna.</i>	<i>Hynyna.</i>

A few familiar phrases will, perhaps, illustrate the agency of these respective Pronouns more clearly*.

* The examples, that follow, are extracted from the excellent Grammar prefixed to Mr. Owen Pughe's Welsh Dictionary. And the writer of this Essay has farther to thank the learned author of that work for his able assistance on the present occasion.

A weli di hun?—Doest thou see *this male*?

Gwelav: a *hunw*, a *hōna* hefyd.—I do: and *that male* and *that female* also.

Pera i *hona* vyned at *hono*.—Bid *that female* present go to *that female* absent.

Mae yn rhaid i *hun*, a *hwmyma*, a *huna*, a *hwyma* vyned at *hunw*.—It is necessary for *this male* and *this here*, and *that*, and *that there* to go to *that male* absent.

In addition to the foregoing the following pronouns may also be noticed, as possessing, by means of their terminal adjuncts, those qualities of discrimination, which are at once the source of precision and elegance. *Minnau*, I also.—*Tithau*, Thou also.—*Yntau*, He also.—*Hithau*, She also.—*Ninnau*, We also.—*Myinnau*, I myself also.—*Tydithau*, Thou thyself also.—*Nyn-ninnau*, We ourselves also.

The other ornamental property, included in the last class, arises from the union of personal Pronouns and Prepositions, accordingly called Pronominal Prepositions, a mode of combination known, though not to an equal extent, to Italian, and always considered a particular beauty in that tongue. The Prepositions, that admit of such a combination in Welsh, are in number three and twenty*, and therefore afford to this feature of the language a far greater variety than is possessed by the correspondent quality in Italian. The few examples, that follow, may serve to illustrate this peculiarity.

Imi, to me, *iti*, to thee, *iddo*, to him.

Atav, towards me, *atat*, towards thee, *ato*, *ati*, &c.

Arnav, upon me, *arnat*, *arno*, &c.

Amdav, or *Amdanav*, about me.

Erov, for me, or for my sake, *erot*, &c.

Canov, with me: *Trwyov*, through me.

Oddiamdanav, from about me.

Trosov, over me: *Rhyngov*, between me.

But it may be more pleasing to have recourse again to the poets.

A dydd brawd y daw *atam* ni yma. *Taliesin*.

And in the day of doom he will come again to us here.

Ti *hebov* nid hebv oedd tau:

Mi *hebod* ni hebav innau. *Cynddelw*.

Thou *without me*, no converse was to thee:

I *without thee*, I also do not converse.

* These are the following:—*am*, *ar*, *at*, *er*, *heb*, *dar*, *hyd*, *i*, *idd*, *hun*, *hon*, *can*, *o*, *odd*, *tan*, *tros*, *trwy*, *oddiar*, *odditan*, *rhag*, *rhwng*, *wrth*, *yn*.

Dybryd yn, veirdd byd, bod daiar *arno*,

Ac *arnan* ei alar!—*Llywelyn. P. Môch.*

Melancholy to us, bards of the world, there being earth *upon*
him,

And *upon us* his mourning.

Hiraeth a'm dug *amdenyw*.—*D. ab Gwilym.*

Grief has taken hold of me *about him*.

Such are, principally, the ornamental characteristics of the Welsh language, as they result from the use of prefixes and terminations; and these, upon a candid examination, will be allowed to contribute in an essential manner to its force and its harmony. The opportunities, thus afforded for the invigoration or embellishment of style, are, in the hands of a master, incalculable: and, if they have not often been turned to the best advantage, it is, perhaps, because even Welsh writers themselves, and they too of celebrity, have not been sufficiently aware of the elementary construction of their native tongue*. However, it is not, therefore, less true, that it possesses these singular attributes, which are the strongest testimonies, as well to the primitive simplicity of its origin, as to the boundless variety, of which its phraseology is susceptible.

* * *

THE TRIADS.—No. XI.

TRIADS OF THE ISLE OF BRITAIN†.

LI. The three Atrocious Assassinations of the Isle of Britain: the slaying of Aneurin of flowing eulogy, the supreme of bards, by Eiddyn, the son of Einygan; the slaying of Aväon, the son of Taliesin, by Llawgad Trwm Bargawd; and the slaying of Urien, the son of Cynvarch, by Llovan Law Dino. They were three bards, who were slain by those three men.

[In the first series of Triads, the second assassin is called Llawgad Trwm Bargawd Eidyn; and the third is called Llovan Llawddino. Urien, the son of Cynvarch, is the same with Urien of Rheged,

* Perhaps there is no work, which exhibits the Welsh tongue to greater advantage in this particular, than the recent translation of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (*Col Gwynfa*) by Mr. Pughe, as it also is the happiest illustration of the powers and resources of the language in every other respect.

† Arch. of Wales, vol. ii. p. 65. Tr. 47—50.